

Defense Leadership and Management Program

Program Promising Bright Future for Civilian Leadership Within DoD

As with any business, one of the greatest assets the Department of Defense has is its dynamic, expansive workforce. Threats to such a pool of talent, real or implied, call for an immediate and forceful strategy.

With an ever-changing mission and personnel leaving for the civilian sector, the Department created a new way to ensure its continued success. By carefully training and mentoring eligible personnel, DoD expects to groom only the most qualified people for the Department's most select positions.

Based on counsel of the Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM), DoD established the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP), designed to provide civilians with the background necessary to assume crucial roles within the Department. The CORM called for a change in the way its leadership develops, including long-term training and rotating assignments, as well as the opportunity for civilians to attend military service schools.

The program relies on its distinctive mentorship aspect between current leadership and program participants. Additionally, DLAMP is considered a "systematic program of 'joint' civilian leader training, education, and development within and across the DoD." Also unique to the program is an environment that fosters a sense of community between its civilian and military leaders. This expansive design ensures an understanding among DoD leaders, be they civilian or military.

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Moreover, DLAMP targets leadership positions within DoD that deal with the more important issues of policy, programs and personnel. Positions in the warfighting arena are also of interest to the DLAMP leadership.

Since its inception in early 1998, several hundred participants have enrolled in

DLAMP training throughout and across DoD. Now in its third year, the program is growing in depth and breadth, and some of its first enrollees are nearing graduation.

In this interview, Dr. Diane Disney offers *Program Manager* readers insights as well as highlights of this dynamic program from her unique perspective as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy).



What was the genesis of DLAMP?



As the 1990s began, it became very obvious that the world was changing more rapidly than ever before. With personnel numbers declining and DoD's mission becoming even more complex, the Department could no longer rely on its old approach to generate enough fully qualified people for top leadership positions. Therefore, in 1994, Civilian Personnel Policy made civilian leadership development one of its top three priorities.

Fortunately, as work with the Components proceeded, the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces [CORM] called for major changes in the way civilian leaders were trained and educated. The CORM recommendations provided solid momentum for accelerating the change. By December 1996, the required Program Budget Decision was signed and in April 1997, the Deputy Secretary signed the enabling Directive. By the start of 1998, the Defense Leadership and Management Program [DLAMP] had recruited its first class and had begun offering classes.



What makes the program unique?



DLAMP, a Department-wide programmatic effort aimed at jointly developing and educating our current and future senior civilian leadership, is unique in a number of ways. First, it is based on a cooperative effort across the various components of DoD. Second, it is premised on the concept of parity between military and civilian development. Finally, the curriculum covers a broad spectrum of DoD functional requirements, including the participants' strategic orientation, leadership development, and ability to integrate analytical thinking and problem solving. The basic elements of the Program are:

- A 12-month rotational assignment that provides an opportunity to broaden the student's experience and apply theoretical knowledge and leadership skills in a practical day-to-day work environment;
- Senior-level professional military education, focusing on national security decision making; and
- At least 10 advanced-level graduate courses to increase business acumen, with an emphasis on the DoD perspective.



What does DoD stand to gain by having "military trained" civilians? Why not keep the division between civilians and military personnel?



The Department of Defense must have a well-trained and responsive total force of military and civilian leaders to meet the challenges of the next century. To this end, the DLAMP goal is to foster a shared understanding and sense of mission among civilian and military leaders.

As the Department continues to streamline its operations in an increasingly complex environment, civilian leaders must be as well prepared as their military counterparts to assume broader responsibilities. Moreover, the DLAMP experience serves to strengthen com-

munication and trust among senior military and civilian leaders, thereby improving their ability to work cooperatively in support of the DoD's national security mission.



What kind of unique opportunities does a civilian gain from entering such a long, intensive program? Why not just enroll in a graduate program?



DLAMP was designed to address the deficiencies in civilian preparation noted by the CORM. It is a comprehensive, career-enhancing program that parallels the successful military development model and emphasizes the DoD experience and DoD needs. Enrollment in a traditional graduate program can indeed be valuable, and for many fields is strongly recommended.

DLAMP, however, provides participants with education from a cross-section of the best schools in a range of fields, going beyond what might be offered at any single institution. Also, its elements are scheduled to minimize workplace dislocation and the stresses that come from taking traditional evening and weekend classes.



What long-term benefits do you hope to realize from the program? What kind of executives do you hope to foster?



DLAMP aims to provide a well-educated cadre of senior civilian leaders who can understand and respond effectively to the complex issues facing DoD leaders. With training and education well outside the traditionally narrow occupational "stovepipes," these leaders will be able to grasp and analyze the issues facing the DoD quickly and thoroughly.

Because they can communicate effectively and work cooperatively with their military counterparts, they will be better equipped to resolve conflicts and support the attainment of mission requirements. Ultimately, their overall performance will be seen as a significant

return on investment to the Department and the American taxpayer.



Are there any tangible successes thus far?



DLAMP is a long-term development program that is only beginning its third year. However, even during this relatively short period, there have been successes. To date, these include:

- Twenty-six graduate-level courses in seven broad curriculum areas have been developed to date including accounting; information systems; economics; human resources; quantitative tools; and law and public policy. By the end of FY 1999, DLAMP will have conducted 60 graduate-level classes, with 822 participants in attendance. For FY 2000, 90 courses have been scheduled.
- DLAMP has greatly expanded the participation of civilians in the Senior Service Schools. To date, 99 participants have completed a 10-month Professional Military Education [PME] course, and 83 additional participants began a PME program in August 1999.
- A three-month PME course (Center for Defense Leadership and Management Program) was established at the National Defense University. Forty-eight participants have already graduated from this specially designed "fast-track" course.
- More than 200 rotational assignment opportunities have been made available to DLAMP participants throughout the Department.
- Sixteen program participants have already been promoted into the Senior Executive Service [SES].



How many have enrolled thus far? Any graduates?



Currently 849 competitively selected participants are actively engaged in all aspects of the program. Several participants are close to completing the requirements for graduation and will probably complete all requirements when the

Capstone Course is offered this coming spring.

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How many civilians do you hope to enroll in the next three to five years?

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Participants do not simply enroll. Component boards, using the SES criteria plus special DoD criteria, select participants competitively. Current plans call for 350 new enrollments per year.

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Explain the benefits of the mentorship aspects of the program? Who may serve as a DLAMP mentor?

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Mentoring is an important ingredient in public and private-sector executive development. DLAMP's mentoring is designed to link each participant with a senior-level DoD official (civilian or military), who will provide guidance on career development. DLAMP mentors play an important role in assessing development needs, identifying career goals, planning for the achievement of DLAMP objectives, and evaluating the student's progress.

Mentors are current leaders who understand how to foster leadership in others. They are willing to share their experiences, insights, and personal

contacts to help others set and meet career goals. To help in the process, the DLAMP Office maintains a clearinghouse of those officials who have volunteered to be DLAMP mentors. Many participants, however, find their own mentors through personal contacts or outreach efforts.

Editor's Note: Dr. Disney welcomes questions/comments concerning this article. Contact her at disneyd@pr.osd.mil. For further information on DLAMP, contact William Speedy at (703) 696-9634 or visit the DLAMP Web site at <http://dlamp.dfas.mil>.

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As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, Dr. Diane M. Disney oversees the development and implementation of policies for managing the Department's workforce of nearly one million civil service and other employees. Her areas of responsibility include staffing, training and education, compensation, labor and employee relations, systems modernization and regionalization, and rightsizing. Her international activities include serving as a permanent member of the U.S.-Portugal Bilateral Commission; chairing a committee for the U.S.-Chilean Consultative Commission; providing technical assistance to the Defense Ministries of Slovenia, Croatia, Chile, and Argentina; and heading U.S. delegations negotiating with Germany on tax and employment issues.

Before coming to the Pentagon, Disney headed the Rhode Island Office of Defense Economic Adjustment, developed and managed the New England Defense Adjustment Project, and worked on numerous other defense-related projects in the region. For several years, she was director of the Research Center on Business and Economics at the University of Rhode Island (URI), where she was an associate professor of management. Active in economic development, she was a principal researcher for the state's Workforce 2000 Council through URI's Labor Research Center, as well as a member of the Governor's JOBS-RI Council.

For several years Disney had an adjunct appointment to the graduate faculty of the Heller School at Brandeis University, where she coordinated the Ford Foundation's project on employment-

related benefits. She has also headed the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts and worked as Rhode Island Associate for the Urban Institute's Nonprofit Sector Project.

In addition to serving as a management consultant to numerous governmental agencies and private concerns, Disney has been a board or committee member for over 30 nonprofit organizations, including the Naval War College Foundation and the National Federation of State Humanities Councils. In the public sector, she has served on the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee, the Federal Human Resources Technology Council, the Governor's Personnel System Review Committee, the Rhode Island Human Resource Investment Council, five state legislative commissions, and the Civil Justice Advisory Board for the U.S. District Court (as vice-chair). She was also a director of Providence Energy Corporation.

Disney received her Ph.D. from Brandeis University in Policy Analysis. She holds graduate degrees from URI as well as Duke University, and an undergraduate degree from Stetson University. She has written and edited publications on various aspects of management and governmental spending and has been book review editor of *Compensation & Benefits Management*. Her own most recent book is *The Sourcebook on Postretirement Health Care Benefits*. In 1994, she was named the Rhode Island Woman of the Year. In 1997, she was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. She also received the Distinguished Alumni Award for 1999 from Stetson University.

